

Excerpts from comments by MARYLAND GOVERNOR PARRIS N. GLENDENING
At conference on the Corridor Cities Transitway
Sponsored by Councilmembers Phil Andrews and Nancy Dacek and by the city of Gaithersburg
ROCKVILLE, MD
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It is a pleasure to be here today because we all share a basic fundamental belief that transit is important to our future and our quality of life.

There are tough decisions to be made, particularly when we talk about development patterns, open space, mass transit, education, and the environment. I just want to say that the Montgomery County Council does an exceptional job. Thank you for your leadership.

Support for transit and commitment to open-space protection actually come together perfectly as two key aspects of Smart Growth. The ability to stem the tide of sprawl and protect our remaining unspoiled land hinges on making our existing communities exciting, attractive places to live. The ability to make our existing communities attractive places to live hinges on providing public transit that is convenient, accessible, and easy to use. I am very pleased to say that in Maryland, with the help of advocates like you, we are addressing both of these challenges.

I know this group has a particular focus that involves improving transit along the I-270 corridor, one of the busiest in the State. Specifically, you support the Corridor Cities Transitway concept that would connect Shady Grove Metro station to Clarksburg.

As you know, my administration has not been shy about investing State dollars to improve transit. It is a key element of Smart Growth. Since taking office in 1995, in the Washington region alone, we have increased our operating budget for transit by 62 percent. Our support of locally operated transit systems, including Ride On and The Bus, has jumped more than 150 percent.

On the capital side, we have added more than \$720 million in transit projects, including:

- The Metro extension to Largo, the first beyond the original 103-mile system, and the first beyond the capital beltway into Prince George's County
- The extension of the MARC Brunswick Line to Frederick; and
- Major investments to pay for Maryland's share of 50 new rail cars and 300 new buses to ensure the viability of the Metro system.

These are solid investments for today, but we are still tasked with charting a course for the transit of the future. Clearly, we have some tough choices to make. You are well aware of the fact that we are taking a hard look at the variety of options available. For example, the Corridor Cities Transitway is just one of the options being evaluated as we look at the benefits of potential improvements along I-270 and the US 15 corridors. In addition, several different alignments for a future Purple Line are being studied as we speak.

With the next federal transportation authorization two years away, we are moving towards decisions that will allow us to prioritize the projects in the region that will deliver both the transportation and the quality of life our citizens want and need. None of these alternatives will be cheap, and realistically, we cannot build them all at once. We are faced with making some

difficult decisions. But we must meet the challenge. We must make choices that will further establish Smart Growth as part of the fabric of Maryland as we shape our communities for future generations.

Think about this: We simply cannot keep building more and more roads. It has been demonstrated that as we build more roads, traffic becomes more congested, air pollution gets worse, and our quality of life deteriorates. We must provide a realistic alternative to the car. The Smart Growth / Anti-Sprawl movement can only succeed if transit is an integral element! That is the approach we are taking in Maryland.

Again, it is our goal to double daily transit ridership in Maryland by 2020. To do this, we must make public transit more than just *an* option -- it must be *the* preferred transportation option for commuters, shoppers, and other travelers.

In Maryland, we are stepping forward to make this happen. We are investing \$3 billion over the next six years to improve and expanding our transit network around the State. Just consider a few of the actions we are taking in addition to those I already mentioned:

- State funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Administration and our major suburban transit systems was increased to their highest levels ever
- Double tracking the Baltimore Light Rail Line;
- Extending MARC commuter rail service to Frederick in Western Maryland;
- New bi-level MARC passenger cars to increase capacity and improve rider comfort;
- New buses;
- Additional parking at transit stations; and
- A new transit center in Silver Spring.

In addition to these physical improvements, we are taking other steps to make public transit more convenient and accessible.

In the Baltimore region we are lowering the cost of weekly and monthly transit passes. We are expanding the use of neighborhood shuttles. And the Baltimore subway will begin running on Sundays and holidays, providing transportation to work, church, and recreational activities.

In the Washington area we are also adding new regular and commuter bus routes while expanding our present system. And -- across the State -- to make transit more convenient we will use Smart Card fare technology. This will allow a rider to use a universally accepted pre-paid fare card on any transit system in the state. A person will be able to travel from Frederick in western Maryland to downtown Washington D.C. on MARC commuter rail, take the Metro to the office or lunch, travel to Baltimore for an Orioles game, and return to Frederick . . . using the same card.

Literally thousands have recognized what we are doing in Maryland to make transit a viable transportation option. They are choosing Metro, Light Rail, or bus over another trip in a car. This is proof that people want transportation options.

Of course, our vision for transit goes beyond new buses and new service. Transit is becoming a cornerstone in everything we do. It plays a key role in Smart Growth as we use our transit stations to help revitalize communities.

Transit Oriented Development is at the heart of our plans. The fact is that you can drive transit ridership *and* improve a community by focusing mixed-use development around transit stations. We want to create outstanding public spaces and corridors near where people of diverse incomes can live, work and invest. We want to connect these public spaces with efficient, balanced transit. We must provide people with the goods and services they need near transit stations, connect them to opportunities by developing job centers adjacent to transit lines, and bring educational and community facilities together with residential space to integrate transit into the heart of that community.

That is what is so intriguing about the Corridor Cities Transitway project. By winding through King Farm, passing near the Shady Grove Life Science Center, running adjacent to Kentlands, and ending north of Gaithersburg it would serve several major commercial and residential areas. This represents the type of innovative thinking we need to make sure we unleash the full potential of public transit.

It is an exciting long-term vision for what public transit can accomplish in our communities. I look forward to receiving more information as the Maryland Department of Transportation continues to study the Corridor Cities Transitway project. This type of transit-oriented development is vital for our future.

People will often tell you that there are only two kinds of growth they do not like . . . sprawl and density! We all know, those are the only two realistic options. As leaders and as advocates, we have the responsibility to make the tough choices necessary to protect our environment and enhance the quality of life in our communities. That means supporting development that integrates quality design with high density.

We must have a more active federal role in support of transit. I have met with Transportation Secretary Mineta about this issue. Think about it. Federal policies -- good, positive, well intended policies -- fueled the exodus from established communities and the spread of sprawl. One of the most effective was the Interstate Highway System, which fueled economic growth -- and sprawl.

Unfortunately, federal transportation funding continues to overwhelmingly favor building new roads while short-changing transit. The most recent federal authorization bill for transportation shows that \$171 billion went towards highways with only \$40 billion going to transit. That represents an 80/20 split.

If we are to reap the benefits of transit, and all that it can mean to Smart Growth and an improved quality of life, this mindset has got to change.

It is already changing in Maryland: This year, for the first time in our State's history, the amount of capital investment added to our transportation budget for transit is roughly equal to that added for highways. In this budget we are adding \$319 million for transit and \$366 million to upgrade our highway network. It must also change in Washington as we prepare for the next federal transportation reauthorization in two years. We must find a more equitable balance in support of transit. We do not want to stop highways, we just want the playing field be made more level between highways and public transit

There are two very different visions for the future of Maryland and for America: We could easily

see a future where congestion continues to grow worse -- where people lose 10 hours a week sitting in traffic, where smog and air pollution become unbearable, and where businesses are forced to shut down because people are simply unwilling to fight traffic to get to them.

Imagine a different future . . . a better vision:

- Where the commute to work--or anywhere--is easy and comfortable on affordable and convenient public transit;
- Where cars no longer clog our highways and choke our air with pollution;
- Where transit stations are hubs of activity, with businesses, shops, restaurants and residences;
- And where transit gives families more time to spend together over dinner or at a daughter's soccer game.

Transit is a key in creating this better future. I'm proud that Maryland is leading the way. Thank you for doing your part.

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